

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DOI-BLM-AZ-C030-2013-0021-EA

CACA 54885

Sundance RV Resort Recreation Commercial Lease

Applicant: Sundance R.V. Resort LLC

San Bernardino County, CA

Lake Havasu Field Office
2610 Sweetwater Avenue
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406

Prepared by: Lake Havasu Field Office
Date: July 9, 2014



Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Identifying Information	1
1.2 Introduction and Project Background.....	1
1.3 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action.....	2
1.4 Decision to be Made	2
1.5 Conformance with Land Use Plan.....	2
1.6 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans	3
1.7 Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues	3
1.7.1 External Scoping.....	3
1.7.2 Public Comments	3
1.7.3 Internal Scoping.....	4
CHAPTER 2 - PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES.....	4
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Alternatives Analyzed in Detail	4
2.2.1 Proposed Action.....	4
2.2.2 Alternative Action.....	7
2.2.3 No Action Alternative.....	7
CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	7
3.1 Introduction/ Background.....	7
3.1.1 Interdisciplinary Team Review.....	8
3.2 Physical Resources	10
3.2.1 Visual Resources.....	10
3.2.2 Water Quality, Drinking or Ground.....	11
3.2.3 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	12
3.3 Biological Resources	14
3.3.1 Invasive and Non-Native Species	14
3.3.2 Migratory Birds.....	15
3.3.3 Threatened or Endangered Species.....	17
3.3.4 Wetlands/Riparian Zones.....	18
3.3.5 Wildlife	19
3.4 Heritage Resources and the Human Environment.....	21
3.4.1 Cultural Resources	21
3.4.1 Socioeconomics	22

3.5	Recreation and Travel Management.....	23
3.5.1	Recreation	23
3.5.2	Travel Management	26
3.6	Cumulative Impacts Summary	27
3.6.1	Introduction.....	27
3.6.2	Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions (RFFA)	28
3.6.3	Cumulative Impact Conclusion.....	28
CHAPTER 4 – TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED		29
4.1	List of Preparers and Participants.....	29
4.2	Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Contacted	29
CHAPTER 5 – REFERENCES & ACRONYMS		29
5.1	References Cited.....	29
5.2	List of Acronyms Used in this EA.....	30

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Stipulations
- Appendix B – Figures
- Appendix C – Photos
- Appendix D – Plan of Development
- Appendix E – Wastewater Treatment System Design
- Appendix F – Potable Water System Design
- Appendix G – Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Identifying Information

Casefile: CACA 54885

Project Title: Sundance RV Resort Commercial Recreation Lease

Legal Description: T. 2 N., R. 26 E., section 25, portion of lot 5, S½SW¼, and section 36, portion of lot 3, San Bernardino Meridian.

Applicant: Sundance R.V. Resort LLC

1.2 Introduction and Project Background

The proposed Sundance RV Resort is located in San Bernardino County, California on the west side of the Colorado River, approximately five miles northeast of Parker, Arizona (Figure 1). The land is located within T. 2 N., R. 26 E., section 25, lot 5 and S½SW¼, and section 26, lot 3; owned by the United States Government; and administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO). The LHFO manages these lands on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation for recreation and wildlife purposes under Department Manual 613.

The Proposed Action is located on the California side of the Parker Strip Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) along the Colorado River. Several portions of the river's shoreline and adjacent federal lands have been developed by the BLM for recreational purposes, which include sites available for day-use and camping. Other segments of the river's shoreline and adjacent federal lands have been developed by concessionaires holding leases issued by the BLM (see Figure 2).

The Proposed Action encompasses three areas (see Figure 3). The first area is a parcel of land leased for a concession formerly known as "Rite Spot" and subsequently "Lizards on the River" (Lizards). Its associated lease (CAAZCA 26694) was transferred from Lizards to Sundance RV Resort LLC (Sundance) on May 3, 2013. Lizards' former operation comprised a convenience store and automobile service building, a residence, two storage sheds (which have been removed), aboveground gasoline storage tanks, and a fenced yard for storage of recreational vehicles (RVs), off-highway vehicles (OHV), and boats. Sundance has remodeled the convenience store to incorporate food and beverage amenities, as well as guest registration. The existing fuel pump and fuel lines have been upgraded; the concession will continue to offer diesel, and gasoline (grades 87, 89, and 91). There are four fuel storage tanks on site that have a capacity to hold 10,000 gallons of various types of fuel. Outdoor storage will continue to be available for customers at the site and the residence would be used to house the site manager.

The second area is BLM's Empire Landing Campground, which currently provides for a variety of recreational experiences including day-use visitation, tent camping, dry RV camping, as well as RV sites with electric and water amenities; public beach access is maintained.

The third area is an existing leach field on federal lands north of Parker Dam Road and is proposed for expansion to accommodate anticipated increases in wastewater disposal. The leach

field is situated within the Crossroads Open OHV Area, which allows for open and unrestricted OHV activity.

All three areas are proposed to be leased to Sundance under a new recreation commercial lease. The received commercial lease application has been assigned casefile number CACA 54885.

1.3 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the action is to process a recreation commercial lease application from Sundance under the 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2920 and 2930. The need for the action is established by BLM's responsibility under Federal Land Policy Management Act to respond to land lease requests.

1.4 Decision to be Made

The BLM would decide whether or not to approve Sundance's recreation commercial lease and if so, under which terms and conditions.

1.5 Conformance with Land Use Plan

The Proposed Action complies with the *Lake Havasu Field Office Resource Management Plan* (RMP) approved on May 10, 2007. The specific management decisions given in the RMP that apply to the Proposed Action are outlined below:

- LR-6; The BLM will continue to lease recreation areas for concessions, state parks, county parks, and city parks in accordance with the prescribed recreation settings (see Map 20 LHFO RMP).
- RR-13; Desired Future Conditions for Parker Strip Special Recreation Management Primary Market Strategy: Destination Market: Regional, national, and international visitors to the Lower Colorado River
- RR-14; Desired Future Conditions for Parker Strip RMZ 1 – Parker Strip Urban will be generally managed for Suburban providing the following:
 - Niche: Vacation use/seasonal occupancy sites and recreation opportunities including boat launching along the banks of the Lower Colorado River.
 - Management Objective: Manage to provide visitors with access to a wide variety of recreational opportunities through concessions and BLM-managed facilities. Manage this zone to provide opportunities for regional, national, and international visitors who use the area seasonally. Enable them easy access to enjoyment of the natural environment through a variety of sustainable recreational activities, including day-use or overnight camping and long-term winter use.
- TE-1; Conserve and protect Migratory Bird species (see Appendix C Table C-7 LHFO RMP) and their habitats, Lake Havasu Field Office will follow the guidance provided within the Migratory Bird Executive Order 13186, *Arizona Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan* (Latta, Beardmore, and Corman 1999), *Partners in Flight Desert and Riparian Bird Conservation Plan* (California Partners in Flight 2006), *USFWS North American Waterfowl Management Plan* (USFWS et al. 1998), and LCRMSCP (Reclamation, USFWS, and MWD 2004).

- TE-2; No net loss of quantity or quality of priority species and/or priority habitats will occur on the Lake Havasu Field Office. See Table 3-4 in the Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement.
- TE-3; Conserve habitat and work toward the recovery of T&E species, as well as reduce the likelihood of additional species listings under the ESA and California ESA.
- TM-22; The 2602 acres in the Crossroads and Copper Basin OHV areas will remain designated open to intensive OHV use. The Recreation Project Plan for the Parker Strip Off-Highway Vehicle Area and Routes was completed in 1996, and no changes in management are proposed (Bureau of Land Management 1996).
- VR-3; VRM Class III – The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

1.6 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

The BLM may grant recreation commercial leases pursuant to Title III of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (90 Stat. 2762; 43 U.S.C. 1732) and the 43 CFR 2920 and 2930 regulations.

Recreation commercial leases would be subject to BLM's Arizona Colorado River District's Concession Review Program.

1.7 Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues

The principal goals of scoping are to allow public participation to identify issues, concerns, and potential impacts that require detailed analysis.

1.7.1 External Scoping

Twenty-one Native American Representatives in the region were contacted by Sundance's project consultant in writing and by telephone to solicit Native American input regarding potential cultural resources concerns over the proposed undertaking. Individual Tribes contacted were the Ah-Mut Pipa Foundation, Chemehuevi, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribe, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians, Ti' At Society /Intertribal Council of Pimu, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, and Quechan Indian Nation. No tribal concerns were noted.

1.7.2 Public Comments

The preliminary EA was made available for public review and comment on March 20, 2014. The public comment period was open for 30 days, and closed on April 21, 2014. The public was notified of the EA's availability through a news release and postings of the news release at BLM's LHFO, Empire Landing Campground, Rock House Visitor Center, Bullfrog Day Use Area (DUA) and the Sundance Outlaw's Saloon. Copies of the EA were available on the Arizona's BLM website and printed copies were located at the LHFO, Rock House Visitor Center and Sundance Outlaw's Saloon. In total over 40 comments were received. The substantive comments that were received expressed concern over the loss of tent camping sites with the proposed development at the Empire Landing Campground. To address the public's concerns, BLM would require the applicant to perform offsite mitigation at BLM's Bullfrog

DUA. The mitigation is described in the Proposed Action and analyzed in Environmental Effects.

1.7.3 Internal Scoping

The table in Section 3.1.1 (Interdisciplinary Team Review) summarizes the resources scoped by the interdisciplinary team on February 20, 2013, for the Proposed Action. Through updated plan of development submittals, additional resources were included in the analysis as resource specialists saw appropriate.

CHAPTER 2 - PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

The Proposed Action encompasses approximately 24.8 acres of federal lands including the current Sundance lease (2.4 acres), Empire Landing Campground (21.5 acres), and the proposed expansion of the existing leach field west of Parker Dam Road (0.9 acre); all three areas are proposed to be cooperatively managed with BLM by Sundance under a singular commercial recreation lease.

2.2 Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

2.2.1 Proposed Action

A total of 124 RV sites would be graded and constructed in two phases (See Figure 3). The keystone block retaining walls would be removed and reinstalled in configuration with the proposed RV sites. It is anticipated that approximately 10,600 cubic yards of material would be excavated and reused to level out the proposed RV site areas and associated roads for access; approximately 3,600 linear feet of roads would be constructed for two-way traffic, which would be approximately 30 feet in width. The keystone blocks would be reinstalled approximately two feet behind the existing seawalls to retain the excavated material; excess keystone blocks would be utilized for decorative landscaping purposes. Additionally, one permanent stormwater basin would be constructed to collect stormwater runoff (See Figure 3).

The first phase of RV site construction involves 64 individual sites along the shoreline; construction would commence upon issuance of a commercial recreation lease. It is anticipated that construction of the first phase would take approximately four months. These sites would be situated behind the existing seawall to ensure that public access to the beach would be maintained; a five foot wide path for access to the beach would be maintained. The riparian vegetation that occurs along the western portion of the shoreline would remain intact. All sites would be outfitted with a suite of electrical, water, and sewer amenities; however, 14 of the 64 sites would not be connected to the sewer system until the leach field expansion is completed.

The second phase involves construction of the remaining 60 RV sites and would occur subsequent to the leach field expansion; it is anticipated that construction of the second phase would take approximately three months. An 800 square foot laundry room facility would be constructed as an amenity for guests; construction of this facility and its associated electrical, water and sewer infrastructure would occur during or after the second phase. The central

bathroom building would also be expanded to accommodate four additional women's showers and four additional men's showers.

Each RV site would occupy an area that is 28 feet in width and 60 feet in length; each site would contain a concrete patio (12 feet by 24 feet) and shade ramada. In total, 5.28 acres would be paved for the RV sites and 1.24 acres paved for the access roads, respectively. Underground utility services to the campsites (i.e. electrical, water and sewer) would be installed during construction activities. All existing RV sites currently available for use at Empire Landing Campground would remain in use during the construction of both phases; this would be communicated to guests through signage and visitor contact.

There are conceptual plans to replace part of the RV sites constructed during phase one with elevated park model units ("tree houses"); up to 23 RV sites would be converted to a total of up to 15 tree houses (See Appendix D – Plan of Development). Additionally, a 48-unit indoor storage building would be constructed at a later date, contingent on customer demand. This facility would be sited either behind or to the northeast of the existing remodeled convenience store (See Figure 3).

Another conceptual plan is to construct a 1,400 square foot resort pool located at the southern end of the site. The pool would measure approximately 57 feet by 25 feet with a 10 foot by 10 foot heated spa. The volume of water for both the pool and the spa is approximately 39,000 gallons. Adjacent to the resort pool a recreation area is proposed which would include two regulation pickle ball courts, three shuffleboard courts, two bocce ball courts, and three horseshoe pits (See Appendix D – Plan of Development). These amenities would be exclusive to resort guests.

The existing fence on the south side of Sundance which separates it from Empire Landing Campground would be removed; the western portion of the fence would be extended to the shoreline. The existing fence that encloses Empire Landing Campground from Parker Dam Road would be maintained. All fencing would be inspected, repaired, or replaced as necessary to prevent burros from entering into the property. Moreover, all access points would have cattle guards and/or electric gates installed to further prevent burro intrusion.

To meet California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) standards, increases in generated wastewater would be managed through the use and expansion of the existing leach field. The existing leach field would be used for wastewater management associated with the first phase of constructed RV sites, as well as the existing Empire Landing Campground RV sites; currently, the existing leach field has a 5,000 gallon per day capacity. Expansion of the leach field would be able to accommodate 10,000 gallons per day, thereby providing the additional capacity necessary for wastewater management generated by the second phase of RV sites (See Appendix E – Wastewater System Design). Construction activities necessary for expansion of the leach field would commence approximately two weeks after a CRWQCB permit is issued; it is anticipated that a completed expansion of the leach field would take one week to construct. The expanded leach field would disturb approximately 1.5 acres; 0.6 acres of which would be utilized as a temporary construction area. As the leach field is situated within an existing designated OHV open area, signage notifying the recreating public of construction

activities would be prominently displayed; the 1.5 acre construction area would be fenced to prevent access by both OHV recreationists and any desert tortoises in the vicinity. Trenches dug as a result of the expansion would be backfilled at the end of each day and the area would be reclaimed upon completion of construction.

The existing water treatment plant that services the Empire Landing Campground is capable of supporting the proposed 124 RV sites. At full capacity, the RV park is expected to consume up to 14,500 gallons of water per day; the estimated annual maximum water consumption for the resort is 13.8 acre feet. The water treatment facility would remain federal property and operated jointly with Sundance. Sundance would outsource the operation of the treatment by contracting with a company who is compliant with San Bernardino County clean water regulations. All operation and maintenance costs for the water treatment plant would be the responsibility of Sundance. All water safety testing would continue with San Bernardino County.

A dock (30 feet by 10 feet) is proposed for construction at the northeast end of the property to accommodate the loading and unloading of a proposed water taxi that would provide transportation for guests between Sundance and the Pirate's Den Resort, which is situated across the river (See Figure 2). The dock would be located in an area that would not conflict with or endanger guests utilizing the shoreline beach areas. This dock would be used exclusively by Sundance's water taxi. Construction would begin after all appropriate permitting is received and is expected to take one week to construct.

Public parking would be located at the northeast end of the site and would consist of 22 parking spaces for day-use and water taxi customers; day-use fees would apply. The swimming beach would remain open to the public as a day-use amenity. Three five foot public access paths would be constructed between the RV sites to allow for beach access from the parking area. A marketing brochure, as well as customer service provided by registration employees would address existing day-use opportunities and activities provided by Sundance. Marketing signage/billboards would be installed to attract visitors and direct traffic into the site.

As a result from the public comments, BLM would require the proponent to perform offsite mitigation for the loss of tent camping sites. In total three individual camp sites, one ADA accessible camp site, and one group camping site would be constructed at Bullfrog DUA therefore converting the DUA into an overnight public campground facility. Other site improvements would include a perimeter burro fence and cattle guards, updated signage, and shade facilities. Camp site construction would follow the Guidelines for a Quality Built Environment (Collins, 2010) to establish 30 foot by 30 foot living space per site and approximately 70 feet of space between each site while the ADA site would meet guidelines set forward by the United States Access Board.

Each site would include a level tent pad, a grill, a fire ring, a natural or manmade shade structure, and a picnic table. The group site would contain approximately 60 feet by 60 feet of living space and multiple site amenities. While picnic tables and grills are already available on site for day users and may be incorporated into camp site design, most facilities (BBQ grills, shade ramadas, picnic tables, garbage cans, etc.) would be transplanted from Empire Landing Campground or purchased to avoid impacting day use opportunities. Grills would not be placed under low

branches or potentially hazardous tree cover and all sites would be cleared of pine needles and flammable organic material.

Each site would be delineated by trees, shrubs, or rocks. Native trees and vegetation would be planted at sites that do not provide natural lines of delineation; rocks would be placed accordingly. If the development of the group site requires the removal of arrowweed, native, riparian (obligate or facultative wet) trees and shrubs will be planted in replacement. Additional riparian planting will be used to supplement loss of arrowweed within the campsites.

Fee increase propositions for overnight use of the site would be submitted for public review and approved by the RAC.

2.2.2 Alternative Action

Under the alternative, the 40 RV sites and existing shower and restroom facilities currently available at Empire Landing Campground would not become a part of the Sundance lease and would remain a BLM campground. The shoreline area of the Sundance Resort would be built as described in the proposed action with the 124 RV sites and other resort features.

2.2.3 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative the new proposed recreation commercial lease would not be issued. There would be no change in the existing BLM management of the Empire Landing Campground.

CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction/ Background

The Parker Strip is located on the Lower Colorado River in the Colorado Desert, which is the western extension of the Sonoran Desert in California. The Colorado River is at an elevation of approximately 366 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the site. From the valley, the land slopes rapidly up to the desert floor at an elevation of approximately 1,200 feet msl. Mountain ranges in the area reach elevations in excess of 2,500 feet.

The Sundance site is located approximately six miles south of Parker Dam in the Parker Strip SRMA on the western bank of the Colorado River near Parker, Arizona. Approximately 9.5 miles of the Colorado River has been developed on one or both banks (see Figure 1). The development includes resorts, private homes, day use areas, boat launching areas, vehicle and boat storage areas, commercial development, and recreational facilities such as golf courses and swimming pools.

The Colorado River borders the site on the east, Windmill Concession is to the northeast, undeveloped land is to the southwest, and Parker Dam Road and undeveloped land are to the northwest. The leach fields would be covered and surrounded by undeveloped land within the Crossroads Open OHV area.

3.1.1 Interdisciplinary Team Review

The following table is provided as a mechanism for resource staff review, to identify those resource values with issues or potential impacts from the proposed action and/or alternatives. Those resources identified in the table as potentially impacted will be brought forward for analysis.

Resource	Resource Status	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis
Air Quality and Climate* <i>Project Lead</i>	PNI	Air Quality would be controlled with dust suppression methods during construction and this project would not contribute to climate change
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern <i>George Shannon</i>	NI	This resource is not present within the project area and was not brought forward for further analysis
Cultural, Historic & Paleontological Resources* <i>George Shannon</i>	PI	See Section 3.4.1
Environmental Justice <i>Project Lead</i>	NI	No minority or low-income groups would be disproportionately affected by health or environmental effects
Farmlands (Prime or Unique) <i>Project Lead</i>	NI	By definition, there are no “prime or unique farmlands” on BLM-administered land within LHFO.
Fish Habitat* <i>Doug Adams</i>	PNI	This resource would not be affected by the project
Floodplains* <i>Vacant</i>	PNI	This resource would not be affected by the project
Forest Management* <i>Vacant</i>	NI	This resource is not present within the project area and was not brought forward for further analysis
Fuels/ Fire Management <i>Mike Trent</i>	NI	There would be no impact to Fire and Fuels Management, the resort would keep vegetation trimmed to prevent fire hazards
Geology/ Minerals <i>Amy Titterington</i>	NI	This resource would not be affected by the project
Grazing/ Rangeland <i>Project Lead</i>	NI	This resource is not present within the project area and was not brought forward for further analysis
Invasive & Non-Native Species <i>Doug Adams</i>	PI	See Section 3.3.1
Lands & Realty <i>Lisa Stapp</i>	PNI	This type of action is allowable under FLPMA
Law Enforcement <i>Jonathan Azar</i>	NI	No law enforcement actions are associated with this action

Migratory Birds* <i>Jennifer House</i>	PI	See Section 3.3.2
Native American Religious Concerns* <i>George Shannon</i>	NI	No Religious Concerns expressed by any of the tribes that were contacted
Noise <i>Project Lead</i>	PNI	This project would not contribute to the noise levels in the area outside of initial construction. Construction would take place during daylight hours to limit noise levels to adjacent resorts
Public Health & Safety <i>Vacant</i>	PNI	This resource would not be affected by the project
Recreation <i>Amanda Deeds</i>	PI	See Section 3.5.1
Socioeconomics <i>Project Lead</i>	PPI	See Section 3.4.1
Soils <i>Vacant</i>	PNI	The site is currently developed and the storm water pollution prevention plan addresses runoff
T & E Species* <i>Doug Adams & Jennifer House</i>	PI	See Section 3.3.3
Travel Management <i>Amanda Deeds</i>	PI	See Section 3.5.2
Vegetation <i>Jen House</i>	PNI	The site is currently developed and no native vegetation exists outside of the functioning riparian area
Visual Resources <i>Amanda Deeds</i>	PI	See Section 3.2.1
Wastes Hazardous or Solid* <i>Cathy Wolff-White</i>	PI	See Section 3.2.3
Water Quality Surface and Ground* <i>Project Lead</i>	PI	See Section 3.2.2
Wetlands and Riparian* <i>Doug Adams & Jennifer House</i>	PI	See Sections 3.3.4
Wilderness, WSAs, Wild & Scenic Rivers <i>Amanda Deeds</i>	NP	This resource is not present within the project area and was not brought forward for further analysis
Wilderness Characteristics <i>Amanda Deeds</i>	NP	This resource is not present within the project area and was not brought forward for further analysis
Wild Horses & Burros <i>Chad Benson</i>	PNI	By project design, burros would be excluded from the resort area and Bullfrog Campground and therefore would not be impacted

Wildlife Aquatic <i>Doug Adams</i>	PNI	This project would not have any impacts on the aquatic habitat
Wildlife Terrestrial <i>Jennifer House</i>	PI	See Section 3.3.5

*Consideration Required by Law or Executive Order

NP = Not Present

PNI = Present, Not Impacted

PI = Present and/ or Potentially Impacted

The impacted resources brought forward for analysis include:

- Visual Resources
- Water Quality, Drinking or Ground
- Wastes Hazardous or Solid
- Invasive or Non-Native Species
- Migratory Birds
- Threatened or Endangered Species
- Wetlands/Riparian Zones
- Wildlife (excluding federally listed species)
- Cultural Resources
- Socioeconomic
- Recreation
- Travel Management

3.2 Physical Resources

3.2.1 Visual Resources

Affected Environment:

The landscape character of the Parker Strip is composed of craggy cliffs around the Parker Dam that give way to a wide river valley downstream. Floodplain soils are dominantly stratified sands, silts, and clays while riparian vegetation is typical of the Sonoran/Mojave Desert zones. The Sonoran/Mojave Desert zone is divided into steep, rocky, mountainous areas and nearly flat alluvial fans. Regional topography consists of mountain ranges arranged in a northeast and southwest orientation, separated by the Colorado River valley. The project area is located between the Buckskin Mountain range to the east and the Whipple Mountain range to the west. The site is bordered by the Colorado River to the east and Parker Dam Road on the west. While the mountain ranges are dominant visual features, the project area can be seen from Parker Dam Road and the eastern river shore. Visible manmade features in the area include Parker Dam Road, Empire Landing Campground, La Paz County Park, Pirate's Den Resort, and Sundance Resort. The proposed project would alter the appearance of the area from semi-developed to developed land; however the facilities would be located near existing features and facilities. No private residences or schools are near the proposed project area.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Although the Proposed Action includes altering the visual resource of the project area, mitigation measures would ensure that all project features are in compliance with Visual Resources Management (VRM) III standards. Project components would repeat and retain the basic elements of the landscape without dominating the view of the casual observer.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- Structures should be treated with a non-reflective finish to reduce light reflection, and increase blending in the landscape setting.
- Standards set forth in the BLM Guidelines for a Quality Built Environment (Collins, 2010) would be followed.
- During the construction period, dust suppression measures would be used to minimize the creation of dust clouds potentially associated with ground disturbance activities and the use of the access road to the leach field.
- The Standard Environmental Colors chart would be utilized to select colors that minimize visual contrast of facilities on the landscape. Semi-gloss paint would be recommended where appropriate to enhance durability yet reduce reflectivity. Colors one to two shades darker than the surrounding landscape would be recommended for selection.

Alternative Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Although the Proposed Action includes altering the visual resource of the project area, mitigation measures would ensure that all project features are in compliance with VRM III standards. Project components would repeat and retain the basic elements of the landscape without dominating the view of the casual observer. Empire Landing camper experience may be lessened under this alternative as the river view from current RV sites would be impacted by the proposed RV sites.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts would occur to Visual Resource Management under this Alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.2.2 Water Quality, Drinking or Ground

Affected Environment:

A water supply well and treatment system currently provides water for the facilities within 2.4 acre Sundance site. BLM constructed a water treatment plant (WTP) that provides potable water for the Empire Landing Campground. The water for the WTP is directly pumped from the Colorado River. The WTP has the capacity to produce 50 gallons per minute and is operated by

the BLM. A 12,000 gallon storage tank located west of Parker Dam Road provides gravity fed water to the campground. A leach field located west of Parker Dam Road provides for wastewater treatment for the Empire Landing Campground and is permitted through the CRWQCB.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

The water supply well located at the 2.4 acre Sundance site would continue to separately service the facilities located within that area. The water supply to support the RV sites proposed for development would come from the Empire Landing WTP. There is an adequate potable water supply for development described in the proposed action (See Appendix F). The construction and location of the leach field expansion would be reviewed by the CRWQCB to ensure that there is no impact to ground water and the Colorado River.

A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan has been prepared by a California-certified storm water planner to ensure that storm water and non-storm water would not impact the Colorado River as a result of construction and operation of the RV resort. The plan is included as Appendix G.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- The lessee would be required to obtain and maintain any permits that may be required for domestic water treatment and wastewater treatment.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

The potable water from the BLM water supply system would be metered separately to account for water used by the Sundance development. The plans for the leach field would not change.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No new impacts would occur to Water Quality under this Alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.2.3 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid

Affected Environment:

Wastewater and domestic wastes (trash) would be generated at the site. The wastewater would be treated through the expanded leach field that would be located west of Parker Dam Road. The domestic trash and small amounts of nonhazardous waste that may be generated during construction would be collected and removed to a landfill. No hazardous wastes would be generated by the operations at Sundance or Empire Landing.

An underground storage tank operated by Rite Spot, which preceded Sundance, released gasoline, including MTBE, to the soil and ground water. A remediation by the owners of the Rite Spot and is expected to be approved for closure by the CRWQCB under the low threat closure plan in 2015. The current on-site fuel storage tanks are double walled, above ground, and were not involved in the release of gasoline at the site.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Wastewater would be disposed of in CRWQCB approved leach fields. The RV sites that are not yet connected to the wastewater treatment system would have the wastes stored in a holding tank which would be disposed of off-site until the new leach fields have been completed. Once the expanded leach fields are constructed, all of the wastewater would be treated through that system. Other domestic wastes would be disposed of in a commercial landfill. Construction wastes are expected to be minimal as the primary construction would be installing utilities, paving roads, and building pads for the RVs.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- Superficial construction and landscaping debris located on the project site should be removed and disposed of in a proper manner.
- The Lessee, its successors or assigns, would comply with all Federal and State laws applicable to the disposal, placement, or release of hazardous substances (substance as defined in 40 CFR Part 302).
- No hazardous material, substance, or hazardous waste, (as these terms are defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. 9601, *et seq.*, or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6901, *et seq.*) should be used, produced, transported, released, disposed of, or stored within the lease area at any time by the Lessee. The Lessee would immediately report any release of hazardous substances (e.g. leaks, spills, etc.) caused by the Lessee or third parties in excess of the reportable quantity as required by federal, state, or local laws and regulations. A copy of any report required or requested by any federal, state or local government agency as a result of a reportable release or spill of any hazardous substances should be furnished to the Authorized Officer concurrent with the filing of the reports to the involved federal, state or local government agency.
- The Lessee would immediately notify the Authorized Officer of any release of hazardous substances, toxic substances, or hazardous waste on or near the lease potentially affecting the lease of which the Lessee is aware.
- As required by law, Lessee would have responsibility for and should take all action(s) necessary to fully remediate and address the hazardous substance(s) on or emanating from the lease.
- The Lessee would comply with all applicable local, state, and federal air, water, hazardous substance, solid waste, or other environmental laws and regulations, existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated. To the full extent permissible by law, the Lessee agrees to indemnify and hold harmless, within the limits, if any, established by state law (as state law exists on the effective date of the lease) the United States against any liability arising from the Lessee use or occupancy of the lease, regardless of whether the

Lessee has actually developed or caused development to occur on the lease, from the time of the issuance of this lease to the Lessee, and during the term of this lease. This agreement to indemnify and hold harmless the United States against any liability would apply without regard to whether the liability is caused by the Lessee, its agents, contractors, or third parties. If the liability is caused by third parties, the Lessee would pursue legal remedies against such third parties as if the Lessee were the fee owner of the lease.

- Notwithstanding any limits to the Lessee's ability to indemnify and hold harmless the United States which may exist under state law, the Lessee agrees to bear all responsibility (financial or other) for any and all liability or responsibility of any kind or nature assessed against the United States arising from the Lessee's use or occupancy of the lease regardless of whether the Lessee has actually developed or caused development to occur on the lease from the time of the issuance of this lease to the Lessee and during the term of this lease.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

The impacts would be the same, with exception of Empire Landing and Sundance Resort managing the wastes separately. There would be no effect on the total amount of waste generated if the facilities were managed separately.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No changes would occur under this alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.3 Biological Resources

3.3.1 Invasive and Non-Native Species

Affected Environment:

An 'invasive species' is defined as a species that is nonnative to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction cause or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health (Executive Order 13112). Invasive, nonnative species are species that are highly competitive, highly aggressive, and spread easily. They include plants designated as 'noxious' and animals designated as 'pests' by federal or state law.

The LHFO RMP identifies the following invasive plants and animals within the field office boundary: downy brome (*Bromus tectorum*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), saltcedar (*Tamarix spp.*), scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), giant-reed (*Arundo donax*), giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*), africanized honeybee (*Apis mellifera scutellata*),

european starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), wild boar (*sus scrofa*), bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), flathead catfish (*Pylodictus olivaris*), quagga mussel (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*), and zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*).

Nonnative weeds, native and nonnative invasive species generally occupy areas of disturbance, such as along commonly used travel routes. Native and nonnative invasive species known to occur within the planning area include saltcedar, quagga mussel, and arrowweed (*Pluchea sericea*).

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Although the Proposed Action includes disturbing additional ground cover, no trees or saltcedar are being removed. Regular maintenance would limit the expansion of arrowweed and saltcedar within the project area. Although quagga mussels may be found within the Colorado River, the addition of proposed dock and associated water taxi should have minimal effects in their spread. The state of California has regulations in place to limit the spread of these mussels by boats.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- Signs would be posted which explain the need to prevent the spread of the Quagga mussels.
- A vegetative landscaping plan is required and should be submitted to the BLM LHFO for review and approval prior to implementation. Landscaping should include only the planting of native species to the Sonoran Desert and river riparian zone.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Impacts would be the same as the Proposed Action.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No dock and associated water taxi would be established. Existing maintenance on Empire Landing would ensure the spread of arrowweed and saltcedar is limited.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.3.2 Migratory Birds

Affected Environment:

Neo-tropical migrant bird species are those species that breed in temperate portions of North American and winter in tropics in either North or South America. Migratory birds are protected and managed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 *et. seq.*) and Executive Order 13186. The MBTA prohibits take of migratory birds and nests (nests with eggs or young). Executive Order 13186 directs federal agencies to promote the

conservation of migratory bird populations and emphasizes maintaining and improving migratory bird habitat.

The Colorado River, as part of the Pacific flyway, provides important food, water, and roosting locations for migrating birds. A variety of migratory birds, including double crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), yellow billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), vermilion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechial*), Gambel's quail (*Callipepla gambelii*), white-winged dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), common poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*), common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), black-chinned hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), great-tailed grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), black-throated sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*), song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), common yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*), white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), and cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*). Although the project location does not have extensive riparian or wetland habitat, a portion of the Empire Landing Campground has mature trees, including tamarisk, which migrating birds may use for roosting. Great horned owls have been sited roosting in the mature tamarisk at the southern end of the project area. Along the southern end of the project area, patches of marsh vegetation may provide habitat for some migratory birds.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Impacts to migratory birds may include temporary displacement of short duration from foraging and roosting habitats during construction of roads, RV sites, leach ponds, and dock. Since no trees or aquatic vegetation is expected to be removed, no impacts to nests are expected. The removal of two tamarisk trees, along the southern end of the project area, may have a potential impact on roosting and/or nesting migratory birds. During the creation of additional leach fields, some shrubs may be removed, but reclamation would be required. A vegetative landscaping plan would replace impacted vegetation with native species within the project area. Site visits on May 9th and 11th, 2014 found no active nests or roosting owls within the two trees identified for removal. By timing the removal of these trees outside the peak nesting season, impact to nesting birds should be mitigated.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- A vegetative landscaping plan is required and should be submitted to the BLM LHFO for review and approval prior to implementation. Landscaping should include only the planting of native species to the Sonoran Desert and river riparian zone.
- Adequate raven-proof trash containers would be located near the proposed storage and RV units to prevent increased littering in the area.
- Trimming of palms, trees, or shrubs during migratory bird nesting season, which occurs from February through August, should only be performed if the vegetation does not have active nesting birds.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Impacts to migratory birds would be identical to those described in the Proposed Action, described above.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No changes would occur under this alternative. No temporary disturbance is expected under the No Action Alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.3.3 Threatened or Endangered Species

Affected Environment:

On February 27, 2014 a listing of threatened and endangered species for the regional area was reviewed for San Bernardino and La Paz Counties from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Using information provided on the USFWS lists, the following species may occur in areas within or surrounding the project area:

- Bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*) – Endangered
- Mojave desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*) – Threatened
- Razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*) – Endangered
- Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) – Endangered
- Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) – Proposed Threatened
- Yuma clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris ymanensis*) – Endangered

AMEC Environmental and Infrastructure, Inc. (AMEC), was retained to conduct a biological assessment of the property included in Sundance, including the leach field area. The assessment included a focus on evaluating the possible presence of Threatened or Endangered Species. No burrows or rain catchment basins associated with the desert tortoise were found. The project area is not within designated critical habitat for the Mohave desert tortoise.

The Colorado River in the Proposed Action area is also designated as critical habitat for the razorback sucker (Federal Register 1994). While adult razorback suckers may live in deep pools in the main channel and lay eggs on gravel bars, there are no side channels or back water areas that would be favored by fry and juvenile fish and also used by the adults.

The Yuma clapper rail requires a regenerative marsh for habitat, which is not present at the site. The southwestern willow flycatcher favors a riparian habitat with dense willow, cottonwood, or tamarisk thickets along streams or bogs, neither of which is present on the property. The yellow-billed cuckoo has been associated with dense cottonwood-willow riparian habitat. Although the yellow-billed cuckoo may nest in tamarisk or mesquite, the necessary dense riparian foliage is not available within the project area.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

The action is not likely to adversely affect the razorback sucker or desert tortoise or their designated critical habitat. The proposed action would not affect the Yuma clapper rail, southwester willow flycatcher. The proposed action is not located near suitable habitat for any of the above listed species. Under the proposed action the proposed project is limited to the disturbed areas of the resort and the temporary disturbance related to the construction of the leach field. Landscaping with native vegetation could result in improved foraging opportunities for wildlife.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- If a desert tortoise should wander on-site and become endangered by any activity, that activity should cease until the desert tortoise moves out of harm's way on its own accord. Every desert tortoise would be avoided at all times. A desert tortoise that needs to be handled to prevent injury or death must be handled by a certified/authorized handler only.
- If any species listed as threatened or endangered under Federal or State of California regulations are encountered during the activities, work would immediately stop. Immediate telephone notification of the discovery would be made to the BLM Wildlife Biologist at (928) 505-1200. The activity may resume only after the Authorized Officer has given approval.
- All personnel must report any sightings of desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife species and Federally listed migratory birds (such as American peregrine falcon) to the BLM Wildlife Biologist at (928)505-1200.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Impacts to threatened and endangered species would be identical to those described in the Proposed Action, described above.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts should occur under this Alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.3.4 Wetlands/Riparian Zones

Affected Environment:

Historically, the Parker Strip was a floodplain with riparian vegetation. Construction of the Parker Dam (Dam) and the controlled releases from the Dam significantly altered the river ecology in the Parker Strip area in both Arizona and California. Layered on the physical alteration of the river are the effects of human development of the resources in the area. The riparian niches that provided habitat to a multitude of species in the past, both resident and

migratory, exist only in small areas between developed properties. The only quasi-natural communities on these parcels are a dry wash along the southwest boundary, dominated by arrowweed (*Pluchea sericea*) and, along the southeastern riverbank, a narrow riparian/marsh community which includes cattail (*Typha sp.*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii ssp. fremontii*), willow baccharis (*Baccharis salicina*), common three-square bulrush (*schoenoplectus pungens var. longispicatus*), fan palm (*Washingtonia spp.*), and giant reed (*Arundo donax*).

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

The riparian zone within the area of the proposed action is a previously disturbed, high human use area. A small amount of vegetated riparian habitat is located on the south western area of the project area and would be maintained in its present state. However, since the BLM would require the Sundance to develop a landscape plan, the addition of native vegetation would improve the riparian zone. In the long term, the landscape plan would advance habitat structure and function and should provide a positive long term cumulative impact. Impacts should be negligible since proposed development is limited to previously distributed and heavily used areas. Therefore, the riparian area would not be negatively impacted.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- The aquatic emergent vegetation (cattails, bulrush, etc.) that occurs along and adjacent to the shoreline of the lease would remain in place, with the exception of the identified beach areas and dock.
- To protect the riparian aquatic emergent vegetation at the southwestern portion of the lease along the shoreline, boat beaching/mooring would be prohibited south of the swimming beach.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Because the riparian zone is entirely within the Sundance Resort boundaries, implementation of the Alternative would not change the impacts.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigation measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts would occur to the riparian zone under this alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.3.5 Wildlife

Affected Environment:

The area contains the natural Sonoran desert species. Public lands in the area provide habitat for a diverse array of wildlife and fish species. The Parker Strip contains over 500 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish. There are no species of wildlife that would have the

potential to be found exclusively within the limits of this proposal. Some of the mammalian species normally occurring in the area include but are not limited to desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), black tail jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus auduboni*), desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*), cactus mouse (*Peromyscus eremicus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), ringtail cat (*Bassariscus astutus*), and various species of bats. Various species of reptiles are also normally found within the area include Gilbert's skink (*Eumeces gilberti*), desert spiny lizard (*Sceloporus magister*), desert rosy boa (*Charina trivirgata gracia*), western diamondback (*Crotalus atrox*), and the California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*).

The Resort is in the Parker Strip Wildlife Habitat Area in the SRMA (see Map 6, LHFO RMP). However, the project areas are all on bare ground and, other than birds, there is no habitat favorable for wildlife within the project areas. Further, there are no designated Wildlife Movement Corridors within six miles of the site (see Map 9, LHFO RMP). General year-round bighorn sheep habitat begins one mile east of the resort, but the closest sensitive bighorn sheep habitat is four miles to the east across the river in Arizona (see map 10, LHFO RMP).

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Temporary displacement of small mammals, birds, and/or reptiles would occur during construction work. The short term impacts upon terrestrial, avian and aquatic species would be minimal, limited to the disturbance caused by the temporary presence of personnel and equipment during the project. Impacts should be negligible since proposed development is limited to previously distributed and heavily used areas. However, the BLM would require the Sundance to develop a landscaping plan to add native vegetation which would improve wildlife habitat.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- Any desert bighorn sheep observed would be avoided and not pursued.
- Adequate raven-proof trash containers would be located near the proposed storage and RV units to prevent increased littering in the area.
- All personnel must report any sightings of desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife species and Federally listed migratory birds (such as American peregrine falcon) to the BLM Wildlife Biologist at (928)505-1200.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Impacts to migratory birds would be identical to those described in the Proposed Action, described above.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts would occur to wildlife under this alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.4 Heritage Resources and the Human Environment

3.4.1 Cultural Resources

Affected Environment:

Since the Resort is adjacent to the Colorado River, cultural properties may occur within the boundaries of the lease. To evaluate this possibility, a cultural assessment was done by CRM Tech (CRM) for this EA in 2013. The CRM investigation included researching the current natural setting, the archaeological, ethnohistorical, and historical cultural setting of the region, Native American participation, and a field survey. This area is generally considered to be a part of the traditional homeland of the Chemehuevi Indians. However, neither studies completed in 1977, 1994, and 2002 in the area cited by CRM, nor the CRM research and field investigation found any historic properties on or near the property. There are no properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, nor are there any eligible for listing.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Since no historic sites or artifacts were found during a field investigation there is little potential to additional surface artifacts, but there is a potential to find subsurface resources during excavation activities

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- The lessee would comply with all State and Federal laws relating to prehistoric or historic archaeological sites or artifacts. Actions other than those explicitly approved by the BLM which result in impacts upon archaeological resources, would be subject to the judicial proceedings of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. As property of the United States, no person may, without authorization, excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any historic or prehistoric site, artifact, or object of antiquity located on federal lands.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

The field investigation for the Alternative covered the same area as the Proposed Action. No historic sites or artifacts were found.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts would occur under this alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.4.1 Socioeconomics

Affected Environment:

The 2.4 acre Sundance concession has historically not generated significant revenue, in part due to the limited facilities that were available (gas station and outdoor storage). Since Sundance has taken over that facility, much of the time has been spent remodeling the site and has recently reopened for business.

Empire Landing currently provides the only BLM campground on the Parker Strip with RV hook-ups, designated tent camping section, low cost shower facilities, and a water/dump station. The revenue collected in fiscal year 2011 totaled \$18,700, fiscal year 2012 totaled \$20,400, and fiscal year 2013 totaled \$25,500. Revenues were the greatest during the winter months of January through March.

Environmental Effects:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

The low cost tent camping would no longer be available to the public at this location. Revenue to the federal government is expected to decrease during the construction activities since visitors may not like to camp adjacent to the construction site. In the long term, the federal government expects to see increased revenue thru lease payments from the site due to the number of available RV sites and the associated amenities.

The construction and operation of the Sundance RV Resort would bring additional temporary and long term jobs to the Parker Strip as well as additional tax revenue. Competition for guests visiting the Parker Strip may increase due to the new opportunity that would be provided at Sundance.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Since the BLM would retain and operation of the Empire Landing RV sites, BLM would directly receive the fees associated with those sites as well as revenue from the Sundance RV Resort.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

The local economy would not see the short term or long term increases in employment and taxes generated related to the proposed development.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.5 Recreation and Travel Management

3.5.1 Recreation

Affected Environment:

The project area falls within the Parker Strip SRMA. Primary activities within this SRMA include all-terrain vehicle use, wildlife viewing, boating access, cultural/historical sightseeing, golf, camping, staying in concession resorts, and pleasure driving on a National Backcountry Byway. Prescribed recreation settings within the SRMA range from semi-primitive to suburban with close access to primitive and rural developed landscapes.

The BLM manages multiple roadside interpretation sites, three fee-free day use areas, one fee day use area, and two fee campgrounds and nine concession resorts within the Parker Strip SRMA. Together, the BLM campgrounds (Crossroads and Empire Landing) offer 16 tent camping sites, 20 dry RV/tent camping sites, 24 dry RV camping sites, and 16 RV camping sites with electric and water hookups. The BLM concession resorts provide a total of 2,892 storage units, 1,461 RV sites, 656 mobile homes, 131 cabins (park models), and 13 lodging rooms.

Empire Landing Campground and Bullfrog Day Use Area (DUA) are the only BLM recreation sites within the proposed project area. Empire Landing was constructed in the 1970s and was remodeled in 2002. Approximately 2,000 people visit Empire Landing each year and site hosts are available year round. BLM performs maintenance and upkeep at the site with the assistance of the site hosts.

Empire Landing Campground offers 40 RV campsites (16 sites with water and electrical hookups), 16 tent campsites, a day use picnic area with shade ramadas, a swim and beach area, and a group picnic area with all sites containing picnic tables and pedestal BBQ grills. Current camp ground stays are limited to 14 days within a 28 day time period. There is no site reservation program available at Empire Landing Campground, although current visitation capacity issues indicate that a reservation system may be beneficial in the winter months.

Three restroom facilities with flushing toilets, sinks, and hot showers are located on site. Informational kiosks and a self-service fee station are located at the entrance to the campground. Additional amenities include a water treatment plant, a sewer lift station, a two vehicle RV dump station, and trash cans throughout the area. Two volunteer site hosts are on duty year-round to provide visitor use services and attend to grounds maintenance. Empire is the only BLM campground on the Parker Strip with a designated tent camping section, low cost shower facilities, and a water/dump station.

Bullfrog DUA is another BLM recreation site within the proposed project area. Approximately 1,000 people visit Bullfrog DUA each year. The BLM performs site maintenance and upkeep with the assistance of year round site hosts.

Bullfrog DUA offers day use opportunities including a sand play area, river swimming and beach access, picnic tables and pedestal BBQ grills. Two vault toilet restroom facilities and one ADA accessible picnic area are located on site. Informational kiosks and a self-service fee

station are located at the day use area entrance. Bullfrog is one of four DUA's along the Parker Strip.

The BLM collects fees under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). According to the Recreation Permit Administration BLM Handbook H-2930-1 page 53, "The intent of the fee program is not to maximize revenue, but rather to provide needed public services while protecting and enhancing public lands and recreation opportunities. Fees should be balanced and affordable for all members of the public, and should not be an impediment to visiting public lands."

The current fee structure of Empire Landing is: \$15 per night for RV and tent sites; \$30 per night for RV site with water/electric hookups; and \$5 to use the dump station. The current fee at Bullfrog is \$5.00 per day. These fees were established after public participation and approval of the Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC) in 2007. Fee increase propositions for BLM administered recreation sites must be submitted for public review and approved by the RAC.

Environmental Effects:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

The direct management of Empire Landing would be under Sundance and the site activities would be managed through their commercial recreation lease. Construction of the new RV sites could temporarily displace campers for up to seven months. The campground could be closed down or sectioned off during construction phases to ensure public awareness and safety. This impact would be temporary in nature and result in a more developed resort facility with expanded recreational and social opportunities.

While the proposed alternative would increase the recreational opportunities available within the project area, it would eliminate the 16 tent camping sites and reduce the size of the day use areas. Since Empire Landing would become part of the Sundance RV Resort, it would no longer be designated as a BLM fee site under REA. This alternative would impact the diversity of recreation sites along the Parker Strip by displacing tent campers at Empire Landing Campground and accommodating them at Bullfrog. All day use opportunities at Bullfrog would remain available for public use. Improved signage and carrying capacity limitations set on camp site visitation size would limit potential user conflicts.

The construction of RV sites along the shore area may create the appearance of an exclusive beach. To address this impact, Sundance Resort would construct four five foot walkways throughout the shoreline RV's to provide visitor access, and promote public use. Sundance would also place advertisements at the entrance gates on Parker Dam Road and informational signage at public parking areas and boat-in beachfront access points to ensure public awareness of low cost day use opportunities.

Access to the beach from Empire Landing would not be impacted as access for day users would remain in place, except during construction. The proposed resort's guest services, boat rentals, and the water taxi would create additional recreational experience for site visitors. The increase in the number of visitors to the strip would be minor in comparison to the number of current visitors and the impact on the entire Parker Strip area is expected to be negligible.

The fee structure at Sundance Resort would range from \$15.00-\$55.00 with discounted weekly rates. Monthly rates would range from \$220.00-\$525.00 in the spring/summer time and from \$220.00-\$495.00 in the fall/winter time. There would be no fee increase applied to current BLM fee sites.

The concessions lease would increase the length of camper stay to 150 days allowing for long-term visitation and increased revenue. Additional fees for electrical usage would be charged to both long term and daily rentals; reservations would be accepted.

Additional visitors at Sundance Resort would shift the current recreational user experience to a more developed setting that may not be sought out by present Empire Landing visitors. Under this alternative, Crossroads Campground would become the single BLM campground facility within the Parker Strip SRMA. Current Empire Landing visitors attracted to less developed, low cost recreational opportunities may be more likely to visit Crossroads creating use capacity concerns as Crossroad Campground has a total of 12 undeveloped sites in comparison the 20 tent and 48 RV campsites offered at Empire.

Current visitor use data shows that both Empire Landing and Campground Crossroads reach full RV capacity during the winter months. There would be potential for public participants who are not drawn to the resort camping experience to explore camping opportunities at Crossroads.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- A marketing brochure, as well as customer service provided by registration employees, should address existing day-use opportunities and activities provided by Sundance.
- Marketing signage should be installed to attract visitors and direct traffic into the site.
- The lessee should conduct construction activities only during daytime hours.
- The lessee should design project features in accordance with federal and industrial standards as well as with applicable state and local codes.
- The lessee should perform offsite mitigation at Bullfrog DUA for the loss of tent camping sites as directed by the Authorized Officer, which should be completed within 6 months of lease execution. Site specific plans for the conversion of the Bullfrog DUA to overnight camping should be approved by the Authorized Officer prior to construction.
- Any recreation specific site features within the project area (i.e. pay station, interpretive kiosk, camp host station, picnic tables) that would not be reused within the resort should be installed at Bullfrog as instructed by the authorized officer.
- The lessee should provide appropriate signage for the new Bullfrog Campground as directed and approved by the Authorized Officer.
- Potable water should be provided without cost to the visitors and site hosts staying at Bullfrog DUA/Campground, Crossroad Campground, Rock House Visitor Center, Quail Hollow DUA, Cable Car DUA.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Visitation to BLM's managed Empire Landing may decrease during the construction activities since visitors may not desire to camp adjacent to the construction site. The construction of RV sites along the shore area would impact the viewshed quality from Empire Landing RV sites and may create the appearance of an exclusive beach. Visitors at Empire Landing would continue to have access to current campground amenities, including day use areas and the shoreline, with no additional fee. The length of visitor stay at Empire Landing campground would continue to be limited to a 14 day out of 28 day length of stay as opposed to the 150 day stay limit at Sundance Resort.

Sundance Resort would also construct three five foot walkways throughout the shoreline RV's to provide visitor access, and promote public use. Sundance would also place advertisements at the entrance gates on Parker Dam Road and informational signage at public parking areas and boat-in beachfront access points to ensure public awareness of low cost day use opportunities.

Under this alternative, Empire Landing would continue to be managed in accordance with REA to ensure that site fees are compliant with the benefits and services provided. The carrying capacity of the combined campground and resort site would increase from 56 campsites to 180 campsites providing potential to triple current visitation rates. Increased visitor density within the site and would impact the overall recreation setting and may increase the potential for visitor conflict.

Current Empire Landing visitors who seek less developed recreation settings than those proposed in the addition of Sundance Resort would be less likely to visit the campground and would seek out alternative camping facilities.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts would occur under this alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.5.2 Travel Management

Affected Environment:

The Parker Strip is within the Cactus Plain Travel Management Area and offers a range of experiences for both motorized and non-motorized users; however, the existing route system is not signed and maps are not available for the public. The area is popular for commercial special recreation permit events, vehicle exploring, and hiking. Generally, the planning area is classified as "limited to existing roads and trails" for motorized travel, unless specific classification has been applied. Crossroads and Copper Basin OHV Open Areas were established in the 1993 Parker Strip Recreation Area Management Plan. The RMP decision TM-22 stated those areas

will remain designated open for intensive OHV use. These open areas contain approximately 2,602 acres of federal land.

Environmental Effects:

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

This alternative proposes a leach field expansion within the currently designated open Crossroads OHV area. Impacts to the open OHV area would be temporal in nature and composed of a one week construction phase disturbing 1.5 acres of lands. Signage notifying the recreating public of construction activities would be prominently displayed; the 1.5 acre construction area would be fenced for the duration of the construction project, temporarily limiting public access and protecting public health and safety. Trenches dug as a result of the expansion would be backfilled at the end of each day and the area would be reclaimed upon completion of construction.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

- Restore the leach field areas of ground disturbance to an appearance similar to pre-project conditions after construction.
- One access road would be allowed for construction and maintenance of the leach field.
- Leach field fencing would encompass the 1.5 acre construction area and would be removed immediately upon construction completion. Informational signage would be placed around the fenced area to inform the public of the construction activities and closure dates.
- The proponent should conduct construction activities only during daytime hours.

Alternative Action

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

Same as the proposed action.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures:

Protective and mitigations measures will be the same as the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Direct/ Indirect Impacts:

No impacts would occur under this alternative.

Protective/ Mitigation Measures: None

3.6 Cumulative Impacts Summary

3.6.1 Introduction

As required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the regulations implementing NEPA, this section analyzes potential cumulative impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFA's) combined with the proposal within the area analyzed. A cumulative impact is defined as "the impact which results from the incremental

impacts of the action, decision, or project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of which agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time” (40 CRF 1508.7).

Potential cumulative impacts are assessed at the resource level. The cumulative impacts analysis area (CIAA) for past, present, and RFFA’s that may generate cumulative impacts varies depending on the resource under consideration. Past, present, and RFFA’s are analyzed to the extent that they are relevant and useful in analyzing whether the reasonably foreseeable effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives may have an additive and significant relationship to those effects.

The CIAA for this proposal is defined as the Parker Strip in California and Arizona. The effects would not extend outside the area because similar types of river recreation experiences are limited to this segment of the Colorado River.

3.6.2 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions (RFFA)

Past and Present Actions

The Parker Strip area of the Colorado River has been heavily developed for residential and recreational use. There are several commercial resorts on both sides of the river as well as state and county park developments in Arizona.

Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

There is the potential for redevelopments and new development of commercial resorts on the Parker Strip on federal, private and tribal lands. There is also the potential for additional private residential development in Arizona.

3.6.3 Cumulative Impact Conclusion

Cumulative impacts to recreation and socioeconomics may include increased site visitation at Empire Landing/ Sundance RV Resort and the displacement of less developed camping opportunities. Site visitor displacement could lead to increased visitation at Crossroads Campground. The anticipated increased use at Crossroads Campground could lead to more instances when the campground is full and the public may seek out opportunities at other camping areas along the Parker Strip. To better manage Crossroad Campground, BLM may need to implement a visitor reservation system. By converting Bullfrog DUA into overnight camping, the low cost camping opportunity would still be available to the recreating public while continuing to provide day use opportunities at Bullfrog. There is expected to be increased use at Bullfrog, but day use visitor displacement is expected to be minimal. There are currently several day use opportunities available on the Parker Strip that meets day use demands at no cost. The operation of Sundance RV Resort may provide a boost to the local economy during construction and operation by providing new jobs and tax revenue.

CHAPTER 4 – TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED

4.1 List of Preparers and Participants

Doug Adams – BLM LHFO Fisheries Biologist

Jayson Barangan – BLM LHFO Assistant Field Manager – Recreation & Operations

Cory Bodman – BLM LHFO Concessions Specialist

David Daniels – BLM CRD Planning & Environmental Coordinator

Amanda Deeds – BLM LHFO Outdoor Recreation Planner

Amanda Dodson – BLM LHFO Assistant Field Manager – Lands & Resources

Jennifer House – BLM LHFO Wildlife Biologist

George Shannon – BLM LHFO Archeologist

Craig Reynolds – Applicant

4.2 Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Contacted

Twenty-one Native American Representatives in the region were contacted by Sundance's project consultant in writing and by telephone to solicit Native American input regarding potential cultural resources concerns over the proposed project. Individual Tribes contacted were the Ah-Mut Pipa Foundation, Chemehuevi, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribe, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians, Ti' At Society /Intertribal Council of Pimu, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, and Quechan Indian Nation. No tribal concerns were noted.

In March and April 2014, the LHFO completed informal consultation with USFWS resulting in a no effect determination for all listed species with the project area.

The Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado River Resources Management Office was also contacted to determine if Reclamation had any concerns and/or impacts to Reclamation's project purposes and river operations. Reclamation provided special conditions and stipulations which are included in the stipulations appendix.

CHAPTER 5 – REFERENCES & ACRONYMS

5.1 References Cited

Bureau of Land Management. 1993. *Parker Strip Recreation Area Management Plan*. Havasu Resource Area, Yuma District Office. Yuma, AZ.

———. 2006. *Bureau of Land Management Recreation Permit Administration Handbook H-2930-1*. Washington, D.C.

———. 2007. *Final Lake Havasu Field Office Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*. Lake Havasu Field Office, Lake Havasu City, AZ.

Collins, Belt. 2010. *Bureau of Land Management Guidelines For A Quality Built Environment*. Washington, D.C.

5.2 List of Acronyms Used in this EA

BLM – Bureau of Land Management
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
CIAA – Cumulative Impacts Analysis Area
CRWQCB – California Regional Water Quality Control Board
DUA – Day Use Area
LHFO – Lake Havasu Field Office
msl – mean sea level
MTBA – Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
OHV – Off Highway Vehicle
RAC – Resource Advisory Council
REA – Recreation Enhancement Act
RFFA – Reasonably Foreseeable Future Action
RMP – Resource Management Plan
RV – Recreational Vehicle
SRMA – Special Recreation Management Area
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VRM – Visual Resource Management
WTP – Water Treatment Plant

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Stipulations
Appendix B – Figures
Appendix C – Photos
Appendix D – Plan of Development
Appendix E – Wastewater Treatment System Design
Appendix F – Potable Water System Design
Appendix G – Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan